

## Joseph Wells, Wesleyan Minister

Joseph, born in 1864, was the eldest son of **Joseph Wells**, a plumber and **Sarah Smith**. Joseph Wells (Snr) was the last in a long line of plumbers called Joseph Wells in Witney in Oxfordshire. Sarah Smith was the daughter of a woollen manufacturer. Joseph (Snr) had a few problems when his parents died intestate. Joseph had to take out a legal notice to ensure he was in control of the sale of their estate which included 11 cottages and 2 acres of land [1].

For some reason Joseph (Snr) and Sarah were never together at the time of any census returns. Joseph became a painter taking lodgings all around the country to pick up jobs. He ended his days in a workhouse in Ashbourne, Derbyshire. They must have spent some time together as Sarah had five children — three girls and two boys. Sarah stayed in Witney to bring up the children.

Daughters **Sarah** and **Harriet** left home to work as drapery assistants in London and mum Sarah joined them in her old age. By some unknown route, daughter **Annie Eleanor** married **William Tinsley Stagg** who was an American lawyer. They married in Singapore and then had three children back in the States. Joseph and Sarah's son **Fred Smith Wells** became a principal of a school in Bath. Fred's son, another Fred (Jnr) became a merchant in Freetown, Sierra Leone, part of a white community of just 250 amongst 80,000 'natives'. During a visit home in 1929 Fred (Jnr) reported on the extraordinary welcome given to pilot Sir Alan Cobham generating an awful

headline and an article demonstrating the appalling racism of the time. Fred provided details of basic accommodation with new electric light, improved sanitation, a bus service and tennis, 'the principal sport for the white population' [2]. Fred (Jnr) retired to Bournemouth.

### BRAVO, WHITE MAN!

#### SIERRA LEONE'S WELCOME TO SIR ALAN COBHAM.

#### A BATHONIAN'S IMPRESSIONS.

Mr. Fred S. Wells, the son of Mr. F. S. Wells, of Green Park College, Bath, who has returned home on leave from Freetown, Sierra Leone, described to a representative of this paper the arrival there of Sir Alan Cobham on his great tour.

"The natives," Mr. Wells said, "went quite wild with excitement when Sir Alan arrived. They left their stalls where they carry on their street trading, to welcome the aviator with cries of 'Bravo! the white man!' and when the seaplane was circling round Freetown the natives in their thousands would follow its flight, rushing in hordes toward the coast when the plane made that way, and back again in the opposite direction when the airman turned in his flight."

#### NOTICE.

I the undersigned, **JOSEPH WELLS**, Witney, Oxon, hereby give Special Notice, that I distinctly repudiate any Business Transactions of whatever descriptions, Sale or Conveyance of any Property or Properties belonging to my late parents, excepting done by me alone, as being legal, my being the only legal representative.

#### BOONS OF CIVILISATION.

Mr. Wells has now been a member of a firm of merchants in Freetown for four years. The town is fast improving its amenities: it now has electric light, improved sanitation, a new hospital, and the roads are receiving more attention. There is also a 'bus service. Although there is no tax on motors, petrol is 2s. 6d. a gallon!

The principal sport for the white population (which numbers about 250, to 80,000 natives) is tennis. Mr. Wells is prominently associated with the Freetown Club, and runs a weekly tournament. He is one of the keenest players in the Club, and recently won a challenge cup. There is a new beach golf course, and ideal bathing and sea fishing.

"One of the happiest events we experience," said Mr. Wells, "is the arrival of the weekly 'Chronicle and Herald.'"

Joseph and Sarah's other son, **Joseph Wells (Jnr)**, started life working as a blanket maker's clerk but then decided to become a Wesleyan Minister. In 1890 Joseph was appointed to serve in Exeter [5]. Upon his appointment it was reported that Joseph was *'a young man, evidently possessing much force of character, and his eloquent discourses are marked by such earnestness or purpose and power of thought'*.

**SPECIAL MISSION AT THE WESLEYAN CHAPEL.**—The Rev. **Joseph Wells**, who has been appointed a missionary for the Exeter district, is conducting a special mission at the Bideford Wesleyan Chapel. The mission commenced on Sunday, when there were good congregations, and will be continued until Thursday, Feb. 27th, services being held daily. The Rev. **Joseph Wells** is admirably adapted to conduct mission work successfully. He is a young man, evidently possessing much force of character, and his eloquent discourses are marked by much earnestness of purpose and power of thought. It is anticipated that all the services will be largely attended.

When he was 34, in 1898, Joseph married **Eva Emmeline Jacob** who was one of four daughters and then two sons of **John Rosser Jacob** and his wife **Mary Elizabeth Webb** who lived at Risca near Newport, South Wales. Joseph had spent the previous three years serving in Blackwood at the heart of the mining valleys to the north of Newport. This was a popular event — *'an hour before the ceremony the chapel was filled and hundreds remained outside'* [8]. They left the wedding for a honeymoon in Tenby.

**RISCA.**  
**WEDDING.**—On Wednesday a pretty wedding took place at the Wesleyan Chapel, Risca, between the **Rev. Joseph Wells**, Wesleyan minister, Blackwood, and Miss **Eva Emily Jacob**, third daughter of Mr **J. R. Jacob, J.P.**, of The Holly House, Risca. The ceremony was to take place at 2 p.m., but an hour before that time the chapel was filled, and hundreds remained outside.

Collier, circuit minister. The bride entered the chapel accompanied by her father, dressed in a gown of ivory white silk trimmed with lace and pearls, long train and veil, with a wreath of orange blossoms, and carrying a bouquet of choice flowers, the gift of the bridegroom. Mr **J.**

Eva's father **John Rosser Jacob** was an interesting, ambitious chap. He was the son of **Jacob Jacob**, a Cardiff maltster, and his wife **Mary Rosser**, a ship owner's daughter from Newport. In the 1881 census John described himself as *'Corn and Flour Merchant, Local Methodist Preacher, Mayor of the Borough of Newport and J Peace'* (Justice of the Peace) which is not a bad set of credentials.



*Corn & Flour Merchant Local  
Methodist Preacher  
Mayor of the Borough of Newport  
J. Peace.*

on political lines. His force of character soon carried him to the front, and he took a very prominent part in all the town's affairs. For the year 1880-81 he was mayor, and became an alderman and J.P.

He was not a man without controversy though. His obituary describes that *'his force of character soon carried him to the front, and he took a very prominent part in all the town's affairs. For the year 1880-81 he was mayor and became an alderman and JP'*, [3, ph1] with liberal politics. There are numerous reports of him objecting to others' opinions and insisting on his own way of doing things. During his life there were several unspecified *'changes of circumstance'* which necessitated changes in career

**A PERSONAL MATTER.**  
The Mayor said he wished to claim the indulgence of the Council whilst he referred to a matter which was personal to himself. On the pages of a paper circulated in the town last night there appeared a statement which concerned himself. Under the heading "Brazen-tongued Temperance Advocates," it was asked if Mr **John Rosser Jacob**, the champion of temperance in Newport, was the same individual who claimed an interest in several public houses in Cardiff; and then the Editor was good enough to inform the public and himself that he was the owner of a double-licensed house known as the Blue Anchor in St Mary-street, Cardiff. In this he considered there was an insinuation that at Cardiff he was interested in and receiving the high rents of public-houses, whilst at Newport he was an ardent temperance advocate. He was there to say that he was not the owner of the Blue Anchor, or any other public house in the kingdom. He knew how to



direction. While he was mayor John was accused of 'Brazen-tongued arrogance' as it appeared that 'Mr John Rosser Jacob, a champion of temperance in Newport, was the same individual who claimed an interest in several public houses in Cardiff' [4]. He denied it vigorously, but, as the son of a maltster, questions were bound to be asked.

John Rosser Jacob died of heart disease, aged 77, and left an estate worth nearly £3 million in today's value which is an interesting paradox for a Welseyan Preacher. However, he approved of Joseph Wells being a suitable husband for his daughter Eva Emmeline. Most of Eva Emmeline's siblings emigrated to Alberta, Canada.

Joseph and Eva Emmeline had one son, **Joseph Percival Wells**, born in Bingley a year after their wedding, which is where Joseph served next. As has always been the tradition in the Wesleyan ministry, Joseph served for a few years at a time in positions around the country. At the time of the 1901 census Joseph and family were still in Bingley. From there he worked in Selby and then Flamborough, East Yorkshire. As if about to embark in a dangerous TV programme, in 1910 Joseph

was appointed to serve as the minister in Midsomer Norton and large congregations welcomed him [6]. Three years later he was replaced by **Samuel Birt Coley**, son of **Samuel Coley** and, coincidentally the nephew of **Mary Ann (Coley) Hart** who had married **Frederick Hart**, the Wesleyan minister buried in Settle graveyard [6].

#### NEW MINISTER AT MIDSOMER NORTON

The annual harvest services were held at the Wesleyan Church, Midsomer Norton, on Sunday, when there were large congregations. The Rev. Joseph Wells, who is the newly-appointed minister, conducted the services. The special music was chiefly of a congregational character, with an anthem in the morning, and two others, "Praise the Lord" and "We will rejoice," in the evening. Mr. J. E. Dolve conducted. There

Joseph and family moved on to Salisbury from Midsomer Norton. During the late 1920s Joseph and family came to Settle to live at the Manse on PenyGent View to serve in the Methodist Church. In 1928 he moved to Keighley bit died a year later, aged 65 [7]. By then Joseph had reserved his plot in Settle graveyard. After Joseph's death Eva Emmeline lived in Station Road, Giggleswick and was joined by Joesph's spinster sister Harriet. They were buried together in Old D52.

#### KEIGHLEY MINISTER.

The Rev. Joseph Wells, of Meadowfield, Ingrow, Keighley, minister at Wesley Place Chapel, Keighley, died in the Keighley and District Victoria Hospital yesterday, at the age of 65. Mr. Wells had been at Wesley Place for about twelve months.

He came to Keighley from Settle, and was at one time minister at Mornington Road Wesleyan Chapel, Bingley. He leaves a widow and one son.

*In Loving Memory of Joseph Wells Wesleyan Minister Led To Higher Service on Oct. 23rd 1929 aged 65 years Also Harriet his sister died July 26th 1949 aged 82 years Also Eva Emmeline his wife died Nov 6th 1949 aged 79 years*

Son Joseph Percival Wells also lived in Station Road working as an assurance agent with his wife **Alice Fowlds**, who also died in 1949. He moved to Keighley after that.

The first person in this grave was six week old **Charles Alderson** who was one of ten children of **John Alderson**, a labourer and **Emily Sherwin**. Charles died in May 1900. John got a job with the Post Office and moved away, ending up in Startford near Barnard Castle.



## Settle Graveyard Project



*This account has been compiled by Sarah Lister as part of the Settle Graveyard Project which has recorded gravestone inscriptions, updated church records and researched the lives of those buried. It has been written in good faith with no offence intended. If I have inadvertently included errors or breached any copyright I apologise and would welcome corrections.*

*The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project and can be found on [dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle graveyard project](http://dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle-graveyard-project). The 'Old Settle' family tree on [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk) includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on [settleresearch@gmail.com](mailto:settleresearch@gmail.com). Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.*

*Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Oxford Chronicle, 2 – Bath Chronicle and Herald, 3 – Western Mail, 4 – Star of Gwent, 5 – North Devon Gazette, 6 – Bath Chronicle, 7 – Yorkshire Post, 8 – South Wales Daily News*

*ph1 – credited to descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username Jane Margetts-Singer,*